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SUBJECT: A/S FRIED'S MEETING'S WITH MONIQUE SALIOU AND  
NICOLAS BAVAREZ

Classified By: Political Minster-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for reason  
s 1.4 (b) and (d)

#### SUMMARY

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11. (C) Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried met January 24 with Monique Saliou, European Affairs Advisor to Socialist Party (PS) party presidential candidate Segolene Royal and, separately, with Nicolas Bavarez, a leading essayist and political analyst regularly consulted on policy questions by Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy. A/S Fried underlined that, whichever of these two leading candidates wins the presidency next spring, the incoming French administration will immediately face a range of pressing international issues, French action on which will require close coordination with American counterparts. Saliou said she had "no news" of any upcoming trip to the U.S. by Royal, and indicated that a visit to the U.S. by Royal could well be postponed until after the election, should Royal win. Bavarez underlined the "watershed" importance of the upcoming election for France, and reiterated his conviction that Sarkozy is the candidate best able to lead the reform of both public policies and public attitudes necessary for France to "accept," and so prosper in, the "reality of its situation" economically and geo-politically. End Summary.

#### SALIOU: RECEPTIVE TO WORKING TOGETHER

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12. (C) Saliou recognized the importance of A/S Fried's offer to get ready "to work together, quickly," in the event of a Royal victory in France's presidential election next spring. Saliou agreed that the urgency of the problems facing the international community -- from Kosovo's final status to Iran's nuclear weapons programs -- would remain undiminished next summer, as the new administration in France takes office. Saliou said that, notwithstanding the difficulties of planning for the post-election period during the campaign, she and her colleagues in Royal's inner circle of advisors were favorably disposed -- indeed, enthusiastic -- about the idea of staying in touch with U.S. officials to exchange views on key issues.

#### WHILE HEWING TO UNINNOVATIVE FRENCH VIEWS

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13. (C) In her views on international issues -- resolving the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, halting Iran's military nuclear programs, countering growing authoritarianism in Russia, etc. -- Saliou however, reflected

a disappointingly conventional French outlook, both suspicious of U.S. motives and timid about advocating action, whether as France or the EU. Saliou, in some instances, also seemed unsure of the substance of issues; for example, she did not seem to understand the preferred end-state for Kosovo, nor the consequences of failing to achieve it. She repeated, as is so often heard from France's political elite of both left and right, that "U.S. pressure on Israel" is the missing element necessary for bringing about resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In addition -- and very much at odds with Royal's on-the-record objection to Iran's nuclear ambitions -- Saliou suggested that Iran's achievement of military nuclear capability was "inevitable," and might well "have to be accepted." Saliou acknowledged that Europe "faced the challenge of getting organized to act effectively" on the world stage, but -- evidently mindful of Europe's energy dependency on Russia -- demurred from making any suggestions as to how Europe might engage in countering growing authoritarianism there.

#### ROYAL'S TRIP TO U.S. UNLIKELY

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¶4. (C) Asked by A/S Fried whether Royal would travel to the U.S. anytime soon, Saliou also stressed that she had "no news" about whether or not candidate Royal would go through with her often-postponed visit to the U.S. A/S Fried re-iterated our willingness to do everything possible to arrange for appropriate meetings for Royal with administration officials if Royal should decide to visit. Saliou expressed appreciation for that on Royal's behalf, but noted that the exigencies of the campaign might well prevent any travel to the U.S. by Royal as a candidate.

#### BAVAREZ: A WATERSHED ELECTION

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¶5. (C) Bavarez agreed with A/S Fried that, following the French presidential election, there would be a window of only months (before the U.S. presidential election season would begin) for coordinating effective initiatives across a range of urgent issues: Kosovo, Israel-Palestine, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. Agreeing that these international issues would be at the forefront of France's attention next summer, Bavarez noted that, until then, the campaign would focus exclusively on domestic concerns.

¶6. (C) Bavarez insisted that the upcoming election was a critical one for France. In Bavarez's view, further delay (another five years of inconsequential nipping and tucking at France's sagging social model) would make it impossible for France "to catch up" -- modernize through controlled reform rather than uncontrollable social upheaval. Bavarez highlighted to A/S Fried "the social crisis" looming for France, should the country continue to fail to integrate a critical mass of its large, immigrant and poor, Muslim population. Bavarez drew a provocative analogy between what France should do to integrate its Muslim population and what Germany did do, successfully -- hugely expensive and time-consuming though it was -- integrating its "Eastern" population. In Bavarez's view, East Germans were as different in their political culture and other social mores from West Germans, as France's urban, and mostly Muslim immigrants, are from mainstream, secular French people -- and only an equally expensive and far-sighted integration effort will successfully pull them into mainstream, contemporary France.

#### THAT IS AN UPHILL BATTLE FOR SARKOZY

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¶7. (C) Bavarez, who, among Sarkozy's advisors, has most insistently and eloquently pushed the candidate to conceive of himself as the leader of watershed economic and social reform, reiterated his view that Sarkozy was the candidate of the "new generation" best able to carry through a program of deep reforms. Bavarez included among these "new generation" candidates, Sarkozy and Royal and Francois Bayrou, of the

centrist Union for French Democracy (UDF) party. Bavarez then outlined the "great difficulties" Sarkozy must overcome to win. First, "normally, the left cannot lose" after twelve "wasted" years of the center-right in power. Second, the left is more united and intent on victory than the right, where "Sarkozy has to face both Bayrou and Le Pen." Third, Sarkozy "still has to parry attacks on him from his own camp." And, last but not least, "the other side has a candidate who is really different," even though, of late, she has been "showing she is not up to the job." Bavarez went on to observe that "there was a great desire for change" among the French, and that Sarkozy was up against the difficulty of pitting his "program for change" against a "candidate who is change."

#### EUROPE AND SUSTAINING TURKEY'S EUROPEANIZATION

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¶18. (C) Bavarez said that "solving the present paralysis of Europe" will figure among the top priorities facing the incoming French administration. Referring to the May 2005 referendum on the EU Constitution which was rejected by French voters, Bavarez said that this had "broken the momentum" of a political Europe able to play a leading role on the world stage. A/S Fried evoked the opposing tendencies currently whip-sawing Turkey's development: on the one hand, an insistent, popular groundswell in favor of liberal democracy and joining Europe (as most recently evidenced by the demonstrations protesting the killing of a leading Turkish-Armenian journalist). And, on the other, a growing sense among Turks of being rejected by Europe, and being pushed to nurture an alternative, Islamic identity. A/S Fried underlined the importance of managing the issue of Turkey's accession to the EU in such a way as to keep Turkey aspiring to Europeanization. Bavarez agreed on the potentially dangerous consequences, should Turkey "escape" from the orbital pull of Europe, but added that it was "electorally very difficult for any French presidential candidate to make the case for Turkey."

#### COMMENT

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¶19. (C) Both Saliou and Bavarez, tracking with comments from a range of Embassy contacts in the campaign organizations of Sarkozy and Royal, stressed that domestic issues -- barring a now unforeseen crisis -- would dominate the campaign,

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notwithstanding the undiminished urgency of a range of international questions. A/S Fried's message about the importance of getting ready now to work together smoothly once a new administration takes office was well-received by Saliou and Bavarez -- who said they would transmit the message to their respective camps. End Comment.

#### BIO NOTES

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¶10. (C) MONIQUE SALIOU: Monique Saliou-Gloux was named International Affairs Advisor on the campaign team of Segolene Royal in November 2006. She currently focuses on advising Royal on European questions. Saliou is a career civil servant. Her background includes experience with agricultural policy and the overseeing of a key, French government study of the cost and productivity of French public servants.

¶11. (C) NICOLAS BAVAREZ: Nicolas Bavarez is an influential author and public intellectual who has long been a close, informal advisor to Nicolas Sarkozy. Bavarez has written a best-selling (for that sort of book) biography of political philosopher Raymond Aron and has, to an extent, assumed the mantle of Aron as France's leading advocate for a "liberal" social order -- stressing individual rights and responsibilities in a society subjected to minimal state regulation. Bavarez' most recent book, "What to Do: Agenda 2007," is reputed to have provided the conceptualization and

theoretical justification for key elements in Sarkozy's reform program.

PARTICIPANTS

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¶12. (C) A/S Fried met with Monique Saliou accompanied by an Embassy notetaker. A/S Fried met with Nicolas Bavarez accompanied by Ambassador Stapleton, Embassy Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt and an Embassy notetaker.

¶13. (U) A/S Fried has cleared this message.  
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